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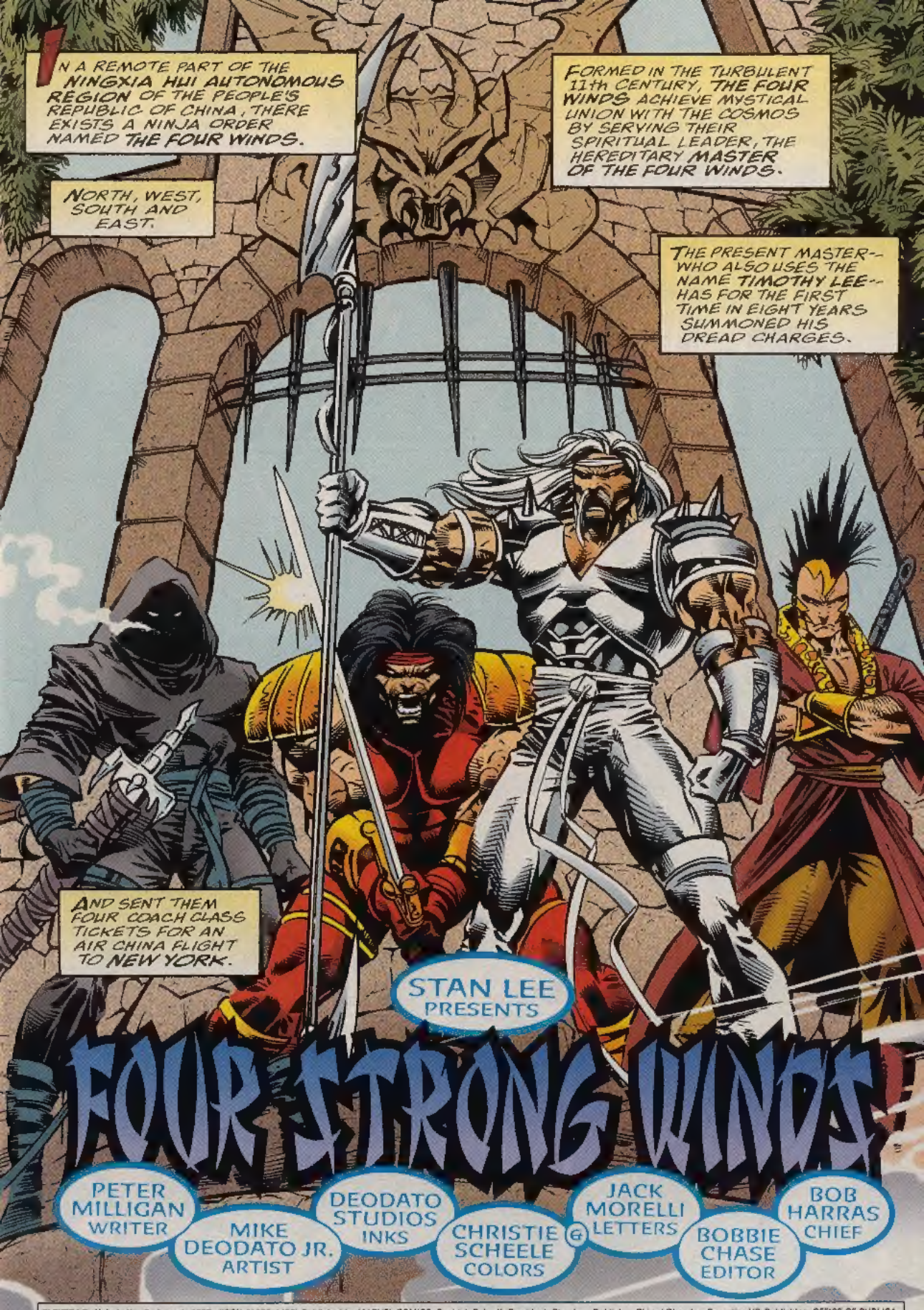

STAN LEE PRESENTS

FOUR STRONG WINDS

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NEW YORK CITY...
TIMOTHY LEE BLUDGEONED A HOOKER TO DEATH WITH A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE.
THE ONLY WITNESS WAS A LOW-LIFE CALLED PIG MALONE.
TOMORROW, PIG WILL TESTIFY AGAINST LEE IN COURT. ASSISTANT D.A. WALKER HAS GIVEN ME THE JOB OF GETTING HIM THERE IN ONE PIECE.
I NEED YOUR HELP, ELEKTRA.
WHY NOT USE YOUR OWN BOYS, MORRISEY?
WHO DO YOU THINK THEY ARE UNDER THE SHEETS?
WE PICKED UP THE PIG TWO BLOCKS AWAY, RANTING ABOUT THESE WEIRD CHINESE PSYCHOS.
LEE IS A HOODLUM AND A KILLER, ELEKTRA. YOU'D BE GETTING HIM OFF THE STREETS.
AND MAKING YOURSELF TEN G's IN THE PROCESS!
IS IT MY IMAGI-
...OR HAS THE WIND JUST PICKED UP?

HEY, I'M PIG MALONE, YOUR STAR WITNESS!
WHERE'S MY PROTECTION?!
I WANT BIG GUYS WITH GUNS HERE THIS--
--minute...
Oh, GOD, PLEASE...
Huh?
...PLEASE DON'T KILL ME...
THERE CAN BE NO MERCY FROM THE NORTH WIND, WHICH IS THE COLDEST AND BITTEREST OF ALL WINDS!!
oh, mother of god...

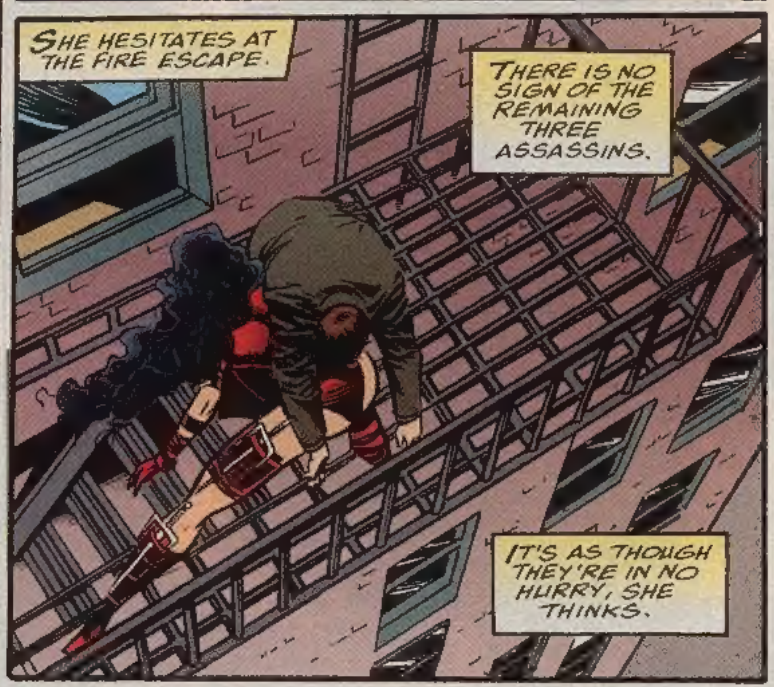
NOW LET'S THINK...WHICH ONE OF YOU IS PIG MALONE?
THE HOODED WARRIOR WITH A SWORD MADE OF ICE?
OR THE LITTLE GUY SQUEALING AROUND ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES?
I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE A GUESS!
DOINGG
THERE IS NO ESCAPE...
...FROM THE WIND THAT REAPS!

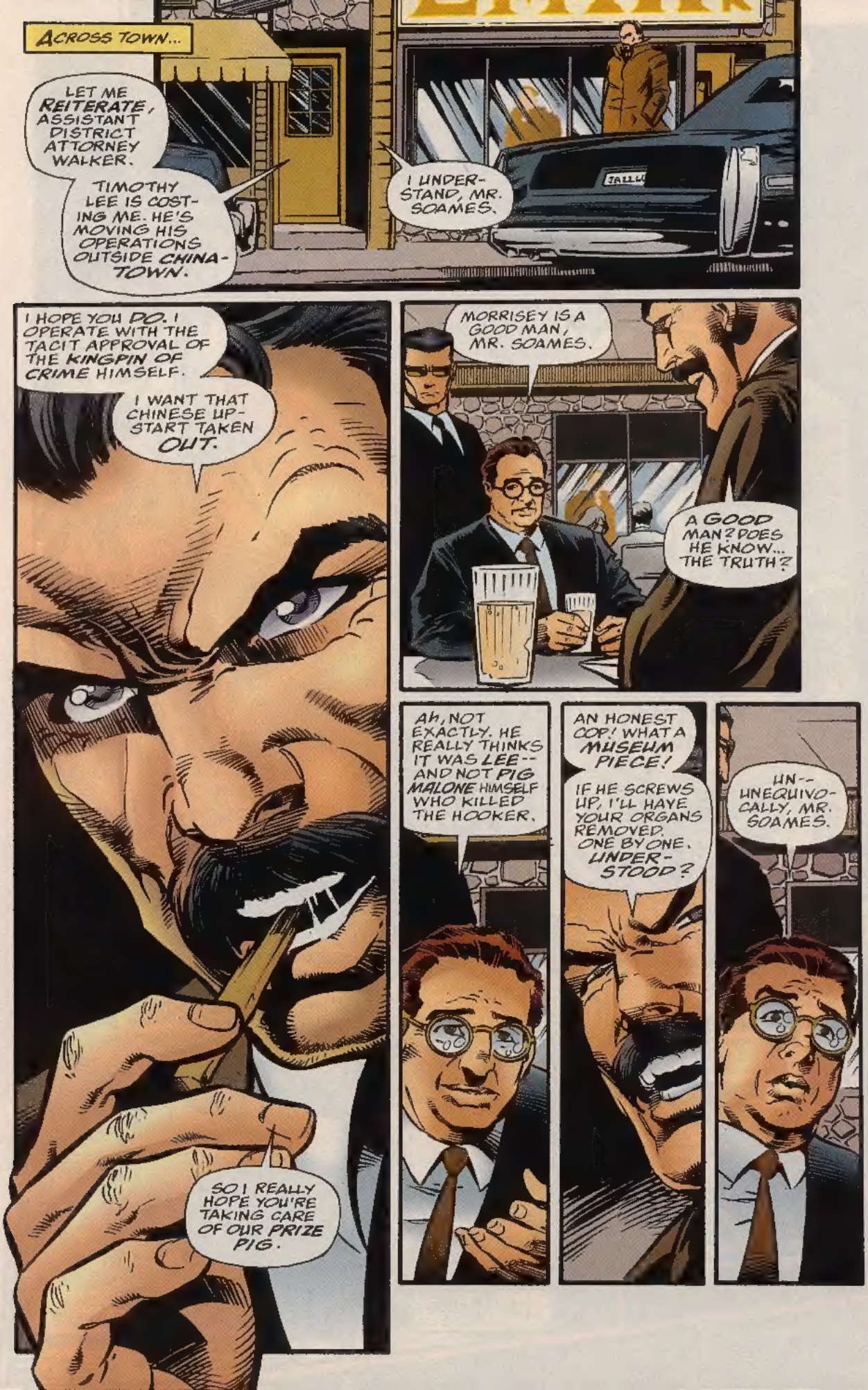
WATCH WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH THAT THING!
YOU'VE SCRATCHED ME.
JUST A SCRATCH.
BUT AN ICE COLD PAIN GRIPS HER ARM.
THE NORTH WIND SWOOPS IN FOR THE KILL.
BUT HAS NEVER MET A MAN OR WOMAN...
THDD
...AS FAST AS THIS!
THERE'S MORE OF THEM.

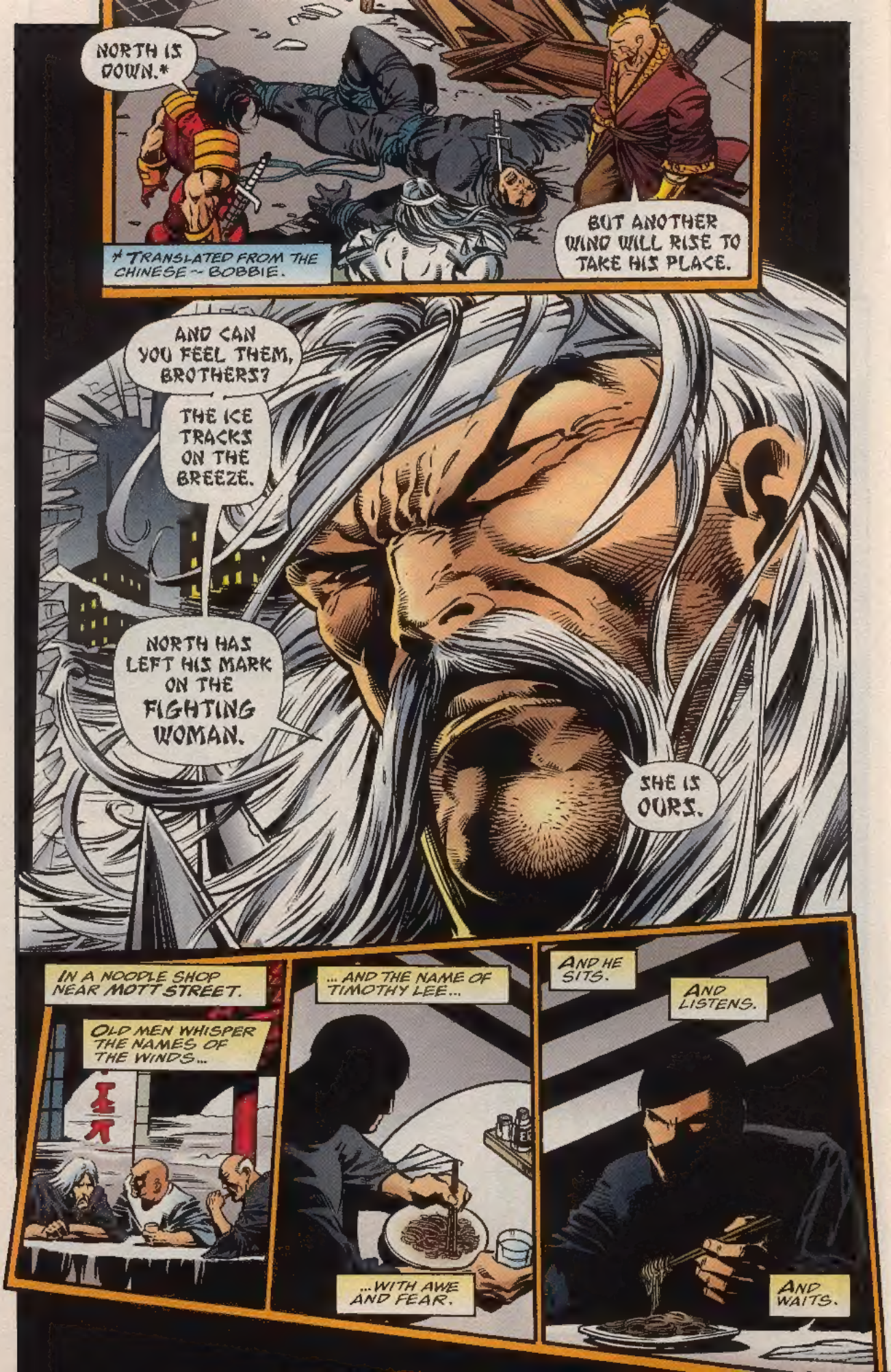
DON'T JUST STAND THERE! FIGHT THEM!!
I'VE A BETTER IDEA.

YOU'RE A GIRL!
YOU'VE NOTICED.
THIS AIN'T A GIRL'S JOB! WHAT GOOD'S A GIRL TO ME NOW? YOU ALMOST GOT ME KILLED BACK THERE!

DON'T TEMPT ME.
TWAKK
GNGH!


SHE HESITATES AT THE FIRE ESCAPE.
THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE REMAINING THREE ASSASSINS.
IT'S AS THOUGH THEY'RE IN NO HURRY, SHE THINKS.


ACROSS TOWN...
LET ME REITERATE, ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY WALKER.
TIMOTHY LEE IS COSTING ME. HE'S MOVING HIS OPERATIONS OUTSIDE CHINATOWN.
I UNDERSTAND, MR. SOAMES.
I HOPE YOU DO. I OPERATE WITH THE TACIT APPROVAL OF THE KINGPIN OF CRIME HIMSELF.
I WANT THAT CHINESE UPSTART TAKEN OUT.
SO I REALLY HOPE YOU'RE TAKING CARE OF OUR PRIZE PIG.
MORRISEY IS A GOOD MAN, MR. SOAMES.
A GOOD MAN? DOES HE KNOW... THE TRUTH?
AH, NOT EXACTLY. HE REALLY THINKS IT WAS LEE -- AND NOT PIG MALONE HIMSELF WHO KILLED THE HOOKER.
AN HONEST COP! WHAT A MUSEUM PIECE!
IF HE SCREWS UP, I'LL HAVE YOUR ORGANS REMOVED, ONE BY ONE. UNDERSTOOD?
UN-- UNEQUIVOCALLY, MR. SOAMES.


NORTH IS DOWN.*
BUT ANOTHER WIND WILL RISE TO TAKE HIS PLACE.
* TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE ~ BOBBIE.
AND CAN YOU FEEL THEM, BROTHERS?
THE ICE TRACKS ON THE BREEZE.
NORTH HAS LEFT HIS MARK ON THE FIGHTING WOMAN.
SHE IS OURS.
IN A NOODLE SHOP NEAR MOTT STREET.
OLD MEN WHISPER THE NAMES OF THE WINDS...
... AND THE NAME OF TIMOTHY LEE...
...WITH AWE AND FEAR.
AND HE SITS.
AND LISTENS.
AND WAITS.

YOU HIT ME! YOU CAN'T HIT ME! WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO HIT ME?!
WE'VE LOST THEM.
WHERE ARE THOSE ...THOSE CREATURES?
OH, RIGHT! AND YOU KNOW THAT FOR SURE.
I KNOW WHEN I'M BEING FOLLOWED. WE HAVE...

...NO.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

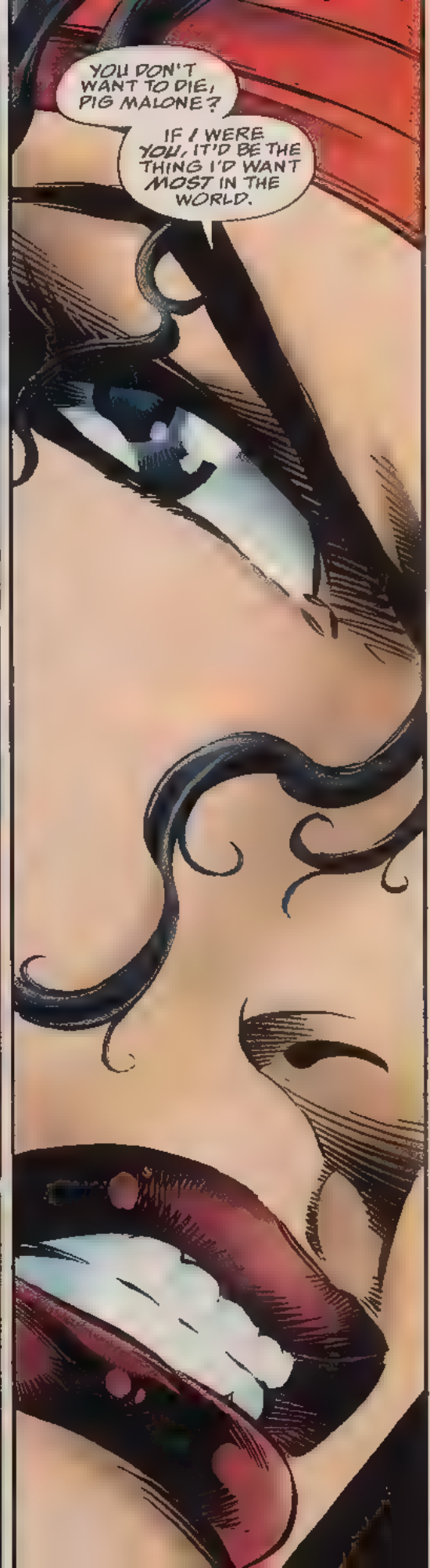
YOU SAID THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW US! HOW DID THEY FIND US, THEN?!
I DON'T KNOW.
NOW GET YOUR HAND OFF ME BEFORE I BREAK IT.

FOR ONE HOUR THEY KEEP MOVING.
CAN'T... CAN'T GO GO ON... GOTTA.. REST...
THEY FINALLY STOP AT A CHEAP HOTEL.
OH, GOD.. I'M... I'M GONNA DIE..
HER ARM FEELS AS THOUGH IT'S BEEN KISSED BY DEATH.
PHONE ROOM SERVICE FOR A DRINK, THERE'S A GOOD GIRL.
HEY! I'M TALKING TO YOU!
GET ME A PIGGING DRINK!
QUIET.
UGNKK!
IT CAN'T BE THEM!
WE AIN'T STOPPED MOVING!!

YES. IT CAN ONLY BE--
--THE WOUND.

THEY'RE TRACKING US BY YOUR WOUND?!
THEN CUT THE PIGGING THING OUT!
USE ONE OF THOSE WEIRD SWORD THINGS AND CUT IT OUT!
CUT THE WHOLE ARM OFF IF YOU HAVE TO!

COME ON! I DON'T WANNA DIE!!


YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE, PIG MALONE?
IF I WERE YOU, IT'D BE THE THING I'D WANT MOST IN THE WORLD.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
WHY AIN'T WE RUNNING?!
NO MORE RUNNING.
I'LL HIDE BEFORE THEY KILL YOU, TELL THEM I'M GONE
TELL 'EM YOU WERE JUST A DECOY OR SOMETHING.
WHO.. ARE YOU, FIGHTING WOMAN?
WHATEVER HAPPENS-- IT HAPPENS HERE.
MY NAME IS ELEKTRA.

YES, WE HAVE HEARD OF YOU. A MIGHTY WARRIOR.
STAND ASIDE WE DO NOT WILLINGLY KILL A MEMBER OF THE HAND.
I GAVE UP THAT MEMBER-SHIP SOME TIME AGO.
BUT THERE IS DARKNESS IN YOUR SOUL. THE SHADOW OF THE HAND PROTECTS YOU...
..OR THE CUT FROM THE NORTH WIND WOULD HAVE FROZEN YOUR HEART BY NOW
I'M A QUICK HEALER
NOW, ARE WE GOING TO FIGHT OR TALK?
WE FIGHT!
AND NOW YOU FEEL THE SOUTH WIND!!
THE FIERY BREATH OF THE DESERT!
THE SCORCHING RAKE OF THE EARTH!

RIGHT.
AND A LOT OF HOT AIR.
FDNGG
AIIEEE!!
THE EAST WIND IS LIGHTNING!
THE THROWING STARS OF RAZORED PAIN THAT SLICE THROUGH MAN AND BEAST!
FROM THE WEST.
...COME CLOUDS OF CONFUSION.
AND NOW THE FIGHTING WOMAN IS DEAD.

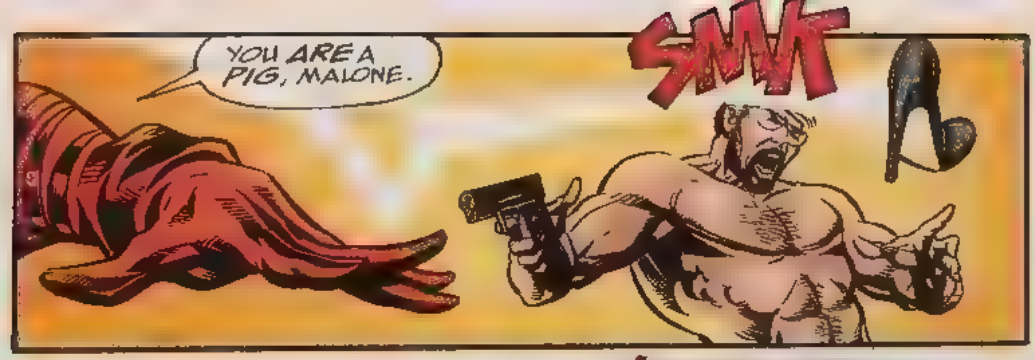
NOT DEAD...
...QUITE YET..
AIIEEE!!
FFDDD
...IN FACT...
...VERY DEFINITELY ALIVE.
KRAK
THDD

COME ON, PIG.
I DON'T THINK THE WIND WILL BE BLOWING AGAIN TONIGHT.
MOMENTS AFTER SHE LEAVES.
HE ENTERS
YOU ARE THE EAST WIND.
I AM THEREFORE SURPRISED AT HOW EASILY YOU WERE DEFEATED.
BY ELEKTRA... A... A WORTHY OPPONENT
ONE PROTECTED BY... THE HAND.
ARE YOU SURE?
THE ONE NAMED ELEKTRA... IS IN LEAGUE WITH THE HAND?
EVEN AS... THE FOUR WINDS, SHALL RISE AGAIN FROM THE FOUR POINTS OF THE GLOBE...
...IT IS SO.

NOW THIS IS COZY.
SAY, YOU'RE NOT UNATTRACTIVE. MAYBE WE CAN GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I KNOW YOU MORE THAN WELL ENOUGH.
I DISGUST YOU, DON'T I? IS IT MY BODY ODOR? OR IS IT THE GIRL?
LOOK, THE LITTLE CAT GOT WHAT SHE DESERVED.
PIG MALONE, THOUGH IT PROBABLY GOES AGAINST YOUR NATURAL DISPOSITION, YOU ARE NOW GOING TO TELL ME THE TRUTH.
AH, NOTHING. SLIP OF THE TONGUE. TIM LEE KILLED HER. LEE... NOT ME.

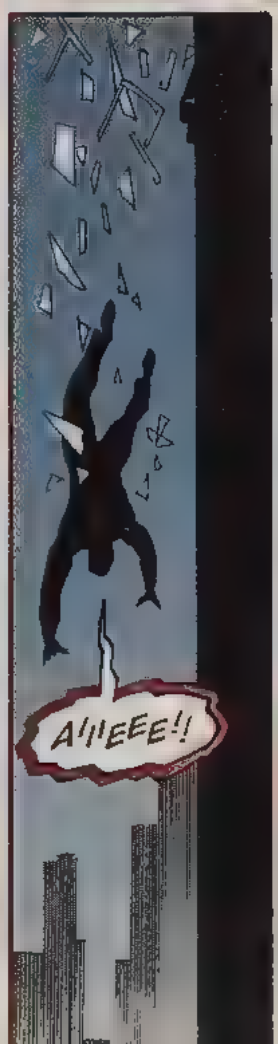
ACROSS TOWN, LATER..
I DIDN'T KNOW! I SWEAR!
I'VE BEEN SET UP!
WE'VE BOTH BEEN USED!
YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT WALKER IS IN THE POCKET OF ONE OF LEE'S COMPETITORS?
AB--
ABSOLUTELY--
ABSO-LUTELY NOT!
WALKER'S A BAD ENEMY TO HAVE.
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
THE WOUND FROM THE NORTH WIND HAS ALMOST GONE
MAYBE THEY WERE RIGHT, AND SHE IS PROTECTED BY THE HAND.
AND SHE DOES HAVE DARKNESS IN HER SOUL.
SO MAYBE SHE SHOULD JUST KILL THE WHOLE STINKING, LYING, MURDERING BUNCH OF THEM.
I DON'T KNOW, MORRISEY.
I DON'T KNOW.

BY THE TIME SHE RETURNS TO THE HOTEL SUITE, PIG MALONE HAS FOUND HIMSELF SOME COMPANY.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE BACK. I WAS JUST DOING A LITTLE CELEBRATING.
JEEZ, WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
DID HE HIT YOU?
KINDA
WHAT AGENCY DO YOU WORK FOR, HONEY?
AN EXCLUSIVE ONE. PUT YOUR SHOES ON AND GO.
WHOA!
HELLO?
EXCUSE ME! I'M IN CHARGE HERE!
NO ONE'S GOING ANY-WHERE BUT WHERE I TELL THEM TO!


YOU ARE A PIG, MALONE.
SMAK

PEOPLE LIKE YOU--
--MAKE IT SO HARD TO BE GOOD.
THWKK
UNGHNN!

KRSHH

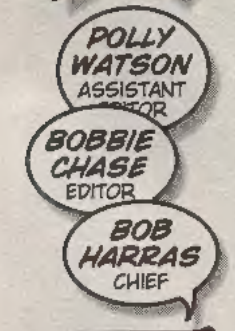

AIIEEE!!

WE'RE TEN FLOORS UP!
I THINK HE MIGHT BE DEAD.

I SHOULD IMAGINE THE WORLD WILL STRUGGLE BY WITHOUT HIM.
THERE'S TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IN THIS ENVELOPE. TAKE IT AND QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD.
I CAN TELL... YOU'RE NOT CUT OUT FOR THIS KIND OF WORK.
LEAVE IT TO THE PROFESSIONALS.
LATER...
DRNGG DRNGG
IT'S ME. THE PIG IS DEAD.
GOOD NIGHT, MORRISEY.

HE WATCHES AS SHE CLIMBS SO EFFORTLESSLY FROM THE WINDOW.
HE HAS HEARD VARYING REPORTS ON HER RECENTLY.
SOME GOOD, SOME VERY BAD.
THE DEAD MAN'S REAL NAME WAS RICHARD MALONE. THEY BURIED HIM FIVE DAYS LATER IN HIS HOMETOWN OF BOSTON, MASS.
ASSISTANT D.A. WALKER WAS FOUND TWO DAYS LATER IN THE MURRAY HILL AREA. HIS KIDNEYS, LIVER, AND PANCREAS WERE NEVER RECOVERED.
HE INTENDS TO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT ELEKTRA.
HIS NAME IS SHANG-CHI, AND HE IS THE MASTER OF KUNG FU.
END

SAI'D BAR



HEY, everybody! Nine issues into the series, and we're still going strong! We've been getting more and more mail lately, but please, keep it coming! The more mail we get, the greater the variety of letters we can print! And from what we've seen so far, you—our loyal readers—have plenty of great things to say! Read on....

Dear Marvel,

This is only the second time in seventeen years of collecting comics that I've felt the need to write in and tell you my thoughts, but the emergence of my favorite heroine in her own series begged for a comment or two.

I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Olav Beemer in issue #5 that a series starring Elektra was long overdue. Since Frank Miller first created her, Elektra has always had much more dimension than most of the characters in comics. I say that because as I've gotten older, I've come to relate to the more down-to-earth characters who inhabit the Marvel Universe, such as the Punisher, Daredevil, and Captain America. Elektra always possessed that quality of human angst that one could readily see and feel; I first encountered her a short time before she was killed in DAREDEVIL #181, and her premature death left me with the distinct impression that a great character was being written off without much fanfare.

Then, 1987's ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN limited series for the Epic line offered the hope she might be returning to the limelight once again, but it wasn't until the excellent "Fall From Grace" storyline in DAREDEVIL that she was returned to the fans. Now, I have to say that for someone used to seeing her dealing with problems in the no-nonsense fashion of yesteryear, Elektra today is both a surprise and a delight. The brooding and driven young woman who spent most of her time denying she had a heart at all is at last attempting to slough off the assassin's cloak and reach for some kind of a normal life.

Excellent story possibilities here. ELEKTRA seems to have a fine cast of supporting characters; I especially like the romantic possibilities in the McKinley Stewart fellow. I was a little disappointed to see the appearance of Bullseye so soon in the series. The first battle between these two was one of Marvel's classic confrontations, and I would have thought an assassin of Bullseye's caliber would have taken his time in setting up a second fight (he had killed her once already, after all). Be that as it may, I will again agree with Mr. Beemer when he says it's a good thing Elektra is putting her past behind her. And I was overwhelmed by the end of issue #5 (and was inspired to type this letter) when she refused the Architect's offer. Elektra's first step beyond what Matt Murdock once called "her awful inner demon" was summed up in that one word of refusal.

The series seems to have gotten off to a terrific start under the guidance of Peter Milligan; here's hoping ELEKTRA has a long and memorable run. And thanks for restoring a favorite character to an old fan.

Russ Carr
(Address withheld by request)

It's great to see that ELEKTRA inspired you to write in, Russ! You're right, Elektra *does* have a heart, even if she tried to deny it for so long. Now, she's trying to get her life in order so she can get back to the basics of being happy again. Unfortunately for her, every villain and his grandmother seems intent on impeding her progress.

Well, it seems we've got a vote for a romance to blossom between Elektra and Mac. What does everybody else think? And we're sorry you were disappointed with Bullseye's immediate appearance in the series, Russ, but as you know, Elektra is trying to put her past behind her, and dealing right off the bat with the man who once killed her is a good start, no? So, does anyone else have anything to say regarding Elektra's refusal of the Architect's offer? Write in and let us know!

Dear *Sai'd Bar,*

I would like to start off by responding to a letter that was printed in the letters page in issue #7. In this letter, the fan (whose name and address were withheld) accuses the current writer of ELEKTRA of mischaracterization and expresses his doubts as to whether Peter Milligan has ever read any of the old comics featuring Elektra. Well, I have read them, and I can see why many Elektra "purists" would decry Mr. Milligan's rendition of her in favor of a more classic approach. But the simple fact is this: all things change, otherwise they stagnate and die. It is change, and a certain degree of unpredictability, that keeps characters fresh and

vital. Besides, who is to say that Elektra is really all that different? She was a killer, true, but she was also someone constantly struggling with conflicting passions and inner turmoil (her love for Matt Murdock, her father's death, her rise to the ranks of the Chaste and subsequent fall when she joined the Hand). No one is ever just one thing, and thus Elektra was always more than just a killer.

Frank Miller himself hinted at and laid the groundwork for all this. It's just that he was writing DAREDEVIL, not ELEKTRA. He therefore did not choose to fully develop Elektra, partly because she wasn't the main character and partly (perhaps mostly) because he intended to kill her off anyway. In short, I don't feel that Peter Milligan is in any way misrepresenting Elektra; rather, he is building and expanding upon the framework created by the great Frank Miller.

I, myself, am impressed by Mr. Milligan's work (and that of everyone else on the book). I thought you guys were playing your trump too soon by bringing out Bullseye in the first two issues, but I was pleasantly surprised to see that he was only an introduction to a more intricate storyline.

I do have one small complaint regarding the events in issue #7. The Taskmaster once held his own against a team of Avengers which included Iron Man, the Vision, and Captain America. There is no way that even Elektra should have been able to take him down so easily. He should have been at least as much of a threat as Bullseye, if not more!

Otherwise, another great issue! Keep it up, guys!

Rick Concepcion
53 W 22 St. Apt. #1
Hialeah, FL 33010

Thanks for writing in, Rick! Elektra certainly *has* changed since her earlier days. She's realizing that living her life the way she once did only won her a long, agonizing death at the hands of a madman. Now that she has a second chance at life, her only logical move would be to try a different approach to living. But as you can see, it doesn't seem like the fates are willing to let Elektra live as normal a life as she might hope for.

Dear Bobbie and Polly,

It's nice to finally see a Marvel heroine title! ELEKTRA is one of my favorite titles! I love the character development, the storyline and the philosophical aspect of it, with Elektra thinking about things in her past and what's to become of her future. Not to mention she's lovely! Please, don't make her hair short. It's perfect being long! Her appearance is just fine! It's also nice to see a heroine get to beat up some big, bad foes.

I hope you continue to develop the character and the storyline with mystery and suspense added in. Don't rush it; quality counts more than how long or short a story is. The current plot with the Architect, fighting, and Elektra's dead father is a good one. And her Greek dance was interesting since it involved the Greek mythology of Electra. It seems like Nina may develop fighting skills? And I wonder who will be Elektra's main romantic interest...

Miki Sibuya
Twin Cities, MN

So, you mean to say that readers actually *like* mystery and suspense? Well, Miki, I guess we'll have to try and squeeze some of that into the upcoming issues. Just kidding! We're trying our best to make sure that each and every issue of ELEKTRA is as pulse-poundingly fun and intriguing as the last! We're glad you liked Elektra's dance; you and our other readers waited patiently to see it, and now it's finally happened. So, what did everyone else think?

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